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Trudeau's inflation cure worse than the disease

by Ross Dowson

Prime Minister Trudeau took us across the threshold into the Seventies proclaiming what he is going to do about inflation, on our behalf. Strange to say, while it is the working people who are already doing the suffering, Mr. Trudeau only promises us worse to come.

I won't lose my nerve, he said, if, as a result of his wages and prices policy there are further rises in unemployment, already over 6 percent of the labor force in some areas of the country. I will press on, he arrogantly declared.

Gone were all the usual words about social justice, the projections of revolutionary change; gone the appeals to the rising anticipations for a more meaningful and fuller life, and the talk about consensus and participatory democracy. It was an arrogant, brutal, calloused declaration of a capitalist-minded machine politician.

And this time Trudeau was not merely making with words. Firing notices for 4,000 to 6,000 public servants were being readied. This coming week notices that within three months their jobs will be terminated will be in the mail. Some may be relocated in other branches but the bulk will not.

One victim is 47 year old Charles Kent of Calgary. His services won't be required after January 31. He would have completed 25 years in the Department of Veterans Affairs in March. He lost both legs below the knee in the Second World War. Another is 55 year old Harry Weir, also with 25 years service. He lost one leg be-

Open The Books!

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Set by Union Labor.

low the knee in the war. Unable to apply for superannuation for another five years, he is wondering how he and his family are going to live on his 160 dollar a month disability allowance in the meantime. Some 70 more National Film Board employees were being tossed out until the announcement that there would be a picket line circling parliament hill, delayed the process. And this is only a taste of what Trudeau is prepared to see develop from his anti-inflationary strategy across the country.

The working people who are bearing the brunt of the continuous inflation, unionists thrust into lengthy strikes against such powerful companies as Stelco and Inco, are being told to restrain themselves — or else have restraints, wage freeze legislation, more union-busting legislation, etc., etc., ruthlessly imposed upon them.

To be sure, Mr. Trudeau attempts to give his policy all the appearances of equity. The handful of key strategic corporations which set prices are also urged to practise restraint — with a difference.

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While the government threatened and boasted about its vast powers to restrain the workers from "feeding the inflationary fires" its minister of finance professed complete inability to do anything at all to restrain the Steel Company of Canada from imposing a six percent increase only a matter of days after the strike settlement. Mr. Benson protested that the government did not have the facts needed to decide whether this price increase was justified.

The simple truth is that the government has so far succeeded in hiding the facts — those that are avaliable — and, for all its powers of investigation, has not lifted a finger to unearth those not now known.

In the face of a demand from the Steelworkers' union that the government investigate Stelco's unilaterally declared price increase that quickly snowballed throughout the price structure, Trudeau instructed his Prices and Incomes Commission to learn the facts — in private!

The Steelworkers, who participated in the closed inquiry under protest, have now released their submission to the public.

Steel leader Mahoney scored the government's private inquiry as in effect an endorsement of big business' practise of using wage increases as an excuse to impose price increases.

The union brief cited data that showed production per man hour at Stelco had increased from 1957 to mid-1969 by 88.5 percent, compared to an increase of 57.2 percent for average hourly earnings. It noted that Stelco's net profits, as a percentage of net worth, have ranged from 8 percent in 1958 to 13.4 in 1968, and that the equity of Stelco's shareholders also increased by 2½ times since 1957.

In summary the union stated that there is no valid evidence to support the government's view that there is a wage-cost push, but that most of the evidence to the contrary is in the hands of the steel companies and inaccessible to the union. Voluntary or even compulsory wage restraints would only insure higher profits for investors.

The Canadian Labor Congress executive council has condemned the government's Prices and Incomes Commission for its failure to protest INCO's 38 percent increase in the price of nickel, although it violates its suggestion that price increases be limited to 2½ percent, and has demanded a full public enquiry into the causes of price increases.

As the Steelworkers' experience points up 1) the Trudeau government is in cahoots with big business in covering up their ruthless inflationary profiteering, and 2) the truth about the cause of inflation lies hidden in the books of the giant corporations which must be flung open to public scrutiny.

The Trudeau cure for inflation, to be swallowed entirely by the working class, is worse than the disease itself. His assault on government employees will result in a further deterioration in public services and is designed as an opening shot in a campaign to widen the pool of unemployed and depress wages. The government is cutting back on necessary urban renewal, and through the manipulation of credit and interest, hopes to "cool down the economy," to curtail purchasing power — to lower living standards.

This policy does not have the support of the government's own Economic Council which thinks the economy is already close to being *too* cool, and besides, considers that what the Canadian government does is relatively ineffectual as the main inflationary pressures come across the border, from the U.S.

The chief source of inflation in the U.S. is the vast expenditure of resources on the war of aggression against the people of Vietnam. The Trudeau government's craven support of this criminal war against the wishes of the American people themselves helps to keep the fires going.

That is why the working class should continue on into the '70s without letup to fight for new wage increases, defended from further erosion by inflation with a cost of living clause that guarantees automatic increases with the rise in living costs. And why it should become ever more deeply involved in the struggle against the war in Vietnam and Canada's complicity in that war.

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Wages below welfare rates, issue in Sask. hospital strike

by Paul Kent

Saskatchewan's Liberal government is attempting to use the developing sympathy for its miserably paid striking hospital workers to blackmail all Saskatchewan labor into accepting the same 6 percent ceiling that it has viciously imposed on the hospital workers.

On December 12 Premier Thatcher enforced his slave labor Essential Services Act against 180 non-professional hospital workers who had struck the Prince Albert Hospital almost a month earlier. Failure to comply would have meant fines for each striker of $1,000 a day and probable decertification of the union.

Still on strike since October 23 are 97 employees of St. Joseph's Hospital in Estevan. Hospital workers in Humboldt, North Battleford, Yorkton and Weyburn, all organized by the Canadian Union of Public Employees, have voted strike but set no deadline. Negotiations are continuing in other hospitals across the province. Eight units have been working without a contract for two years.

The wages paid to hospital workers are a recognized scandal. The bulk of the workers would be better off financially if they quit work and went on public welfare. Prince Albert Hospital wages average $299.29 a month.

No one denies the justice of their demands. At Prince Albert the hospital board and union had agreed on a contract. At Estevan a conciliation board came to unanimous understanding — but settlement was broken by the imposition by the Thatcher government of a 6 percent limit on what it was prepared to underwrite.

By the imposition of this artificial ceiling, the crisis it causes in hospital operations and the suffering it imposes on the hospital workers, the Liberal government hopes to further undermine and destroy the hospital plan that had been erected by the previous CCF-NDP government.

Should the local boards agree to any in-

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Sask. strike challenge to NDP, labor

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crease over the 6 percent ceiling they are compelled to raise it themselves — through hoising local property taxes. The Saskatoon city council has agreed to pay the deficit of Saskatoon City Hospital. Regina General Hospital has asked the provincial government to take it over. When Thatcher declined, the board asked the city council to pick up the deficit. Instead the council has voted to seek a legal decision whether the provincial government can refuse to pay a deficit in operating costs.

Thatcher is now attempting to turn the growing demand that the 6 percent ceiling be lifted off the abysmally low paid hospital workers, against the employees of the civil service and crown corporations, including 11,000 telephone and transportation workers who are in various stages of bargaining. He is offering to consider allowing more than a 6 percent wage increase to the hospital workers if other groups conform to his 6 percent line.

The results of this ruse however may well be just the opposite of what Thatcher intends. The rest of organized labor and the NDP may really get behind the hospital workers and transform their struggle into a body blow against the Thatcher government which would return the NDP to power in Saskatchewan.

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NDP brass screens socialist views

by Anne Macdonald

The expulsion of Young Socialist Abie Weisfeld from the New Democratic Party (see note this page) and the threatened expulsion of four York Center riding members on the grounds of their alleged membership in the League for Socialist Action (article last issue) has raised afresh the question of Trotskyism in the NDP. NDP officials charge that the LSA and YS are an opponent political party, or parties, and that membership in them is thereby incompatible with membership in the NDP.

The NDP leadership, it almost goes without saying, have never permitted a fair discussion of the question within the party; for instance, at the recent Ontario provincial council meeting, where the Hamilton West resolution urging an end to the ban on the LSA and YS as political parties was debated, no representative of either organization was invited to come and defend their point of view.

Other left wing groups like the "Waffle" or left caucus are ominously being termed a "party within the party" by their right wing opponents within the NDP. That alone indicates that this question has broad implications for the entire left within the party.

Is the LSA (or the YS which is in essential political solidarity with the LSA) a political party? Basically, a party is a group of persons organized for a common objective, who are openly contending for political power against all other parties. It may be large or small; for example, the Communist party, small as it is, feels obliged in order to justify its claim to be a party, to run candidates against the NDP, and attempts to present itself as some sort of alternative to the NDP.

The LSA's conduct scarcely fits this description. Far from opposing the NDP, it defends the party as an historic step forward for the Canadian workers, and challenges the party to fulfill its promise by moving forward in a socialist direction. The LSA urges workers to join the NDP and work within it to win the party to socialism.

Where the LSA presents candidates for public office — as in the recent Toronto and Ottawa civic elections, where the NDP failed to present a full slate — it has been within the framework of supporting the NDP and the principle of independent labor political action which it represents, and certainly not in opposition to the party.

The YS is the only tendency which consistently defends the NDP in the student milieu, where the New Democratic Youth is virtually nonexistent.

The views of the LSA and YS are openly presented in the *Workers Vanguard* and *Young Socialist Forum*. Such independent journals have long been recognized as necessary for any tendency which seeks to make its views known, and — as the experience with *Tribune*, the organ of the British Labor party left, or even the Waffle caucus in the NDP has shown — their existence is in no way inconsistent with active participation in a broader formation; rather, it is the necessary complement of such activity.

It seems evident that vis-à-vis the NDP, the LSA and YS constitute an organized political *tendency*, not a party; a tendency which, moreover, has a spotless record in defense of the NDP.

The right wing NDP leadership charges LSA members with divided loyalty toward the NDP. But this charge can't stand up against the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, not only in the general policies of the League and YS, but in the support of the NDP registered in every issue of the *Vanguard*, in its election campaigns, its forums, its other public statements. Significantly, the NDP leadership has *never* been able to present a jot of evidence of disloyal acts towards the party by alleged LSAers. (In fact, some NDP brass complain that LSA members are too active in party-building activities!)

Consider, by way of contrast, the record of the NDP leadership, which frequently presents its own views as those of the party membership, when the membership has expressed itself otherwise. A recent example was Andrew Brewin's statement that he might resign as foreign affairs critic in parliament rather than defend the Winnipeg convention's demand for Canada's immediate withdrawal from NATO, and the failure of both Brewin and T. C. Douglas since then to support that demand in the house. The LSA, however, has no interest in misrepresenting NDP policy. Where the party is wrong, it says so clearly; and where the party has a correct position, the LSA is in the vanguard of those elements seeking to commit the party to implement that policy.

Just as the LSA is in effect an organized tendency which seeks to operate within the NDP as a legitimate part of it, the right wing of the party is also an organized relatively homogeneous tendency — but a tendency which exercises absolute control over the party press, its activities, candidates and public face. And this tendency, unlike others, seeks and exercises the power to exclude consistent opponents of its own brand of politics like the LSA from the NDP. Yet by virtue of what authority does it appropriate to itself the right to decide which ideas are acceptable in the party, and which are not?

What the brass really fear is a confrontation within the party between its own opportunist make-capitalism-work concepts and the revolutionary socialist ideas which today are making headway among the student youth, and tomorrow threaten to spill over into broad layers of the working class. Yet the party can only gain through such a confrontation, for it is only through embracing the liberatory ideas of socialism that the working class will find its way free from capitalist exploitation.

It is therefore in the interest of the NDP itself, as the labor party, to ensure that the attempts to expel these socialists are stopped once and for all.

We pay price for U.S. takeover

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by Ross Dowson

The federal government commission's 1968 report on foreign ownership in Canada revealed some startling facts on U.S. takeovers of Canadian industrial and financial institutions. But in reality it only lifted the curtain on what is an ongoing, vastly accelerating process.

The report, called the Watkins report after its chairman Melville Watkins, found widespread foreign (largely U.S.) control of Canadian industry, including 46 percent of manufacturing (97 percent of auto production), 74 percent of petroleum and natural gas, and 59 percent of mining and smelting. The 87 foreign takeovers of Canadian companies in 1964 was the high point in the process.

But 1968, according to figures now tabled by Consumers Affairs Minister Basford, saw 155 takeovers, with the uncompleted data for 1969 already standing at 103.

Almost 3,000 companies have neglected with impunity to disclose their financial statements or reports on their operations and directors as required under the Canada Corporations Act. Thus the full extent of the U.S. takeover is not fully known. But the effects are becoming more and more clear — and ominous — for the Canadian working class.

Take the case of the U.S. owned conglomerate White Consolidated Industries. Five months ago "for reasons of economy" it decided to close down its plant in London, the former Kelvinator of Canada plant, that had employed 600 workers. This phasing out of certain plants picked up by financial speculators in the process of building up conglomerates, without regard to how they may individually meet their profit demands or their final operational concepts, is to be seen in every area of Ontario.

Of the last 380 to be dropped from Kelvinator, only 14 had a skilled trade. One hundred of them had been with the company more than 20 years. Two months after the shutdown a survey showed that of the 237 who replied to a questionnaire 49 percent were still out of work. Of those who had found jobs elsewhere 51 percent had

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had to take less pay than their Kelvinator job.

Or take the case of the phenomenally rich potash workings in Saskatchewan. For the most part these fields have been taken over by giant U.S. chemical corporations. Shipments to the U.S. last year worth 60 million dollars brought the price there down to $12 a ton from the $20 level of about three years ago. The U.S. Tariff Commission interceded with the declaration that Saskatchewan potash is being dumped on the U.S. market, by the very corporations which control U.S. potash production. Saskatchewan's Liberal government responded by establishing a fixed price of $18.75 (U.S.) per ton — thus doing for the potash companies what they themselves would have been prevented by law from doing.

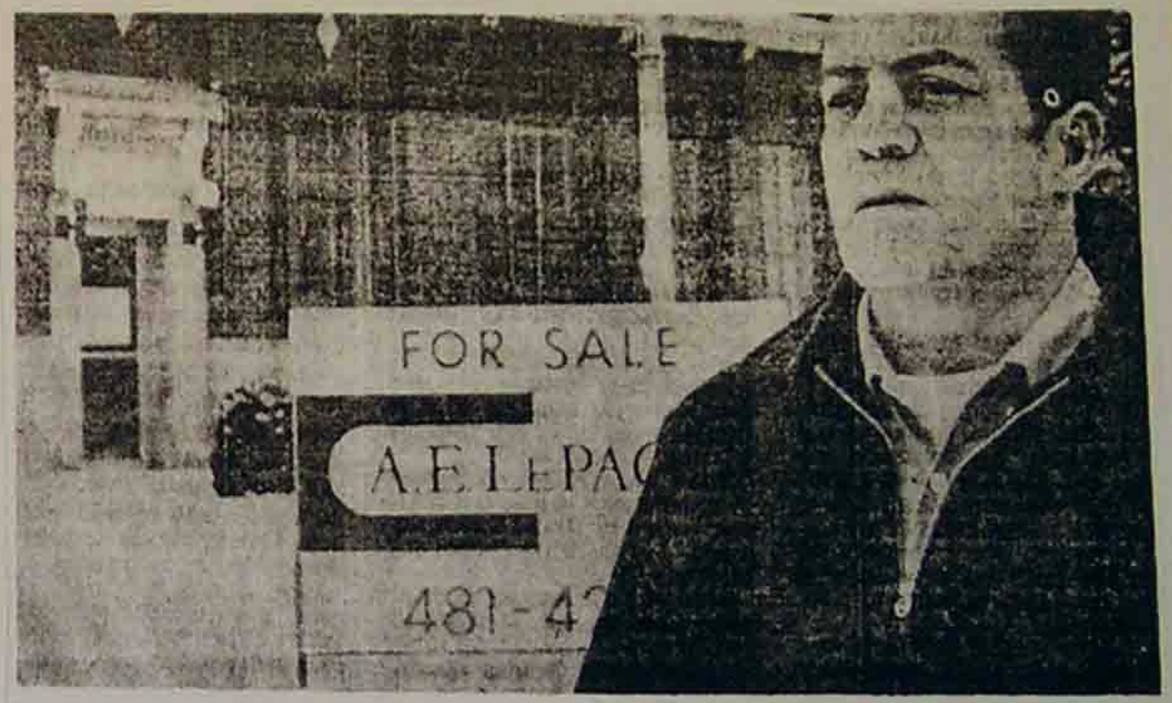
To bolster up this fixed price the government ordered a cutback in production — the Canadian operations have been placed on an average of 55 percent of capacity. So Canadian farmers working the land on top of the Saskatchewan deposits, to fertilize it with potash, will pay a price artificially pegged to serve U.S. capitalist interests while half of the productive capacity of the mines is wasted and there are drastic staff layoffs.

Prime Minister Trudeau has been talking for sometime now of recognizing China and opening up trade with her peoples, but it is not at all serious, for his government has abided by Washington's 19-year-old ban on all forms of American trade with China. There is no doubt whatsoever that Ottawa's China policy is made not in Canada but in U.S.A. U.S. dominated industries on Canadian soil which control 94 percent of the auto and truck industry and at least 46 percent of all Canadian manufacturing are governed, not by Canadian law, but by laws framed in Washington. Ottawa has accepted this situation and in fact actually enforces Washington's regulations.

That is why, now that the Nixon administration appears to be adopting a softer line on China, there was so much interest here in Washington's December 19 statement. Was there to be any change in Canada's trade relations with China?

Washington told Canada that goods which it decides have a military or strategic importance cannot enter into Canadian trade with China. Washington told Canada that the cotter pin clause persists. Export or re-export of U.S. origin goods is banned — a Canadian built truck containing a cotter pin manufactured in the U.S. is barred from sale to China.

Canadian big business and its Liberal and Tory political servants suffer this humiliation as junior partners in the exploitation of this country's resources, and as its satellite on the world political arena, in the conviction that their fate as a class is in the hands of the American capitalist class. They are confident that the overhead costs can be thrust on the backs of the working people.



PRICE OF FOREIGN OWNERSHIP. Kelvinator closed its London plant leaving 600 men like Melville Kilby out in the cold. Company wouldn't even share cost of government help which is available for laid-off workers.

The growing forces in the NDP that have rallied around the statement For an Independent Socialist Canada have correctly affirmed that there can be no independent sovereign Canada other than through a socialist Canada.

But they have not yet spelled out a program to concretize this generalization in any meaningful way, that can waken the NDP and mobilize new forces in the struggle for socialism. What have we to say to the former Kelvinator workers in London and those who are yet to face the same problem? Why don't we launch a drive to get the Ontario government to allocate funds from its industrial opportunity program or the federal government to allocate funds from its regional development scheme to put the plant back into operation and if necessary to retool it for the production of marketable goods? Why not demand that it be placed under the control of the workers on the job?

And what about the Prairie farmers already in difficulties due to the accumulation of the wheat crop and who will be having to pay an exhorbitant price for fertilizer due to the international potash price cartel instituted by the Thatcher government? Why don't we launch a many sided campaign to smash the fixed price, initiate a legal assault under the anti-combines legislation, mobilize the miners to end the limits placed on production, and force the selling of the potash through the farmers' coops at cost.

Such struggles would build the forces necessary to compel U.S. owned industries to accept all orders from the workers states and the Third World and so provide jobs for Canadian workers or be taken over and placed under public ownership.

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DEBATE ON AMERICANIZATION. Prof. Robin Mathews speaks to socialist seminar while Ross Dowson (right) waits to reply. Others at head table are Joe Young and Jacquie Henderson of Young Socialists.

Road to socialism is debated at seminar

by John Crandall

TORONTO — Over 120 people from across southern Ontario met here Jan. 2-4 at the Socialist Weekend Seminar to debate the theme "The Coming Canadian Revolution" with well-known speakers of many viewpoints. The weekend was sponsored by the League for Socialist Action and the Young Socialists.

The significance of the New Democratic Party to socialists, a consistent focus of the weekend's discussion, was the theme of a four-member panel on Jan. 3. Karl Jaffary, recently elected NDP alderman in Toronto's ward 7 and NDP federal vice-president, startled the audience as he opened the panel with the statement that neither the NDP nor the LSA can bring socialism to Canada, and that a new political movement is necessary.

Jaffary went on to elaborate that the NDP and LSA are "transitory groups," while the real movement exists outside. The new movement, he said, is "in many ways outside the tenents of socialism. It is a democratic movement, for control over peoples' own environment. The new political formation I am talking about has to be a class party," he continued, and explained "the lower class embrances many strata, including students, women as well as the working class."

John Chamard, a past NDP federal candidate, questioned the stability of community groups Jaffray was referring to, and continued, "We must turn them toward a coherent political expression, and that must be a political party. Only the NDP can do that." At the same time he underscored part of Jaffary's argument in commenting: "I doubt whether the NDP or any other politicians will achieve power without destroying their program."

Marc Llanos, NDP aldermanic candidate in the recent Toronto elections and third panel participant, called on the left to "come back into the NDP, take over the ridings. The federal party leadership is the key post to take."

The fourth member of the panel, Dick Fidler, League for Socialist Action candidate in Toronto's war 7, directly took issue with Jaffary's position and defended unequivocally the perspectives of the NDP. Community groups might initially reject the NDP, he explained, either because of the NDPs leadership's failure to meet their needs or because, like the majority of Canadian workers, they have not yet come to understand the need for a working class political party. "But their struggles are objectively leading to the NDP."

The problem with the NDP, Fidler stated, was not its nature as a *political* alternative — this is its most progressive feature — but its bankrupt reformist program. It is illusory to think that the NDP could or should be replaced by some "broader" or less politically oriented movement. He emphasized the need for socialists to support the NDP, and to build their forces within it to win it to a class struggle socialist orientation.

The previous evening had seen Robin Mathews, who won prominence in launching with James Steele the campaign against U.S. domination of the universities, debate LSA executive secretary Ross Dowson on "A Strategy Against U.S. Domination." Mathews presented the struggle for Canadian independence as "the local variant of the Black power movement" — the necessary foundation for a Canadian socialist movement.

Dowson, while accepting Mathews' fundamental argument on the overriding danger posed by U.S. imperialism, challenged those who recognize this danger to develop an analysis of the Canadian power structure, which supports U.S. domination, and a strategy to achieve workers power in this country.

A third session of the conference featured Colleen Levis, member of the Young Socialists Executive Council who has just completed a cross-Canada speaking tour on women's liberation. She discussed the revolutionary dynamics of the struggle for women's liberation, and its direction towards linking with the movement for a socialist revolution.

The themes of the NDP debate were developed further in the final session by John Riddell, the LSA's Toronto mayoralty candidate. He analyzed how decaying capitalism was making socialist revolution both possible and necessary for fundamental social change. "Experience shows," he stated, "that parties like the NDP, reformist, parliamentarist and bureaucratic to their core, have proven incapable of achieving socialism. We can see that a party is required which is revolutionary in its program and its active engagement in the class struggle."

Socialists must support the NDP as the present political arm of the Canadian working class, he explained. Further, they must work in it to overcome the barrier to socialist action posed by the NDP's right-wing leadership. In doing this they can forge the unity of revolutionary forces by building the League for Socialist Action.

excellent with interesting twists + concept implied dead

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Pollution: some advice from the government

by The Editors

Pesticides are ruining our lands and livestock. Industrial wastes foul our streams, rivers and lakes. Carbon monoxide threatens to make our cities uninhabitable. Strip mining ravages our natural resources.

The evidence is overwhelming . . . terrifying. President Nixon's scientific adviser warned recently that we have only a 50-50 chance of reaching 1980 before pollution effectively kills off the human race. He may exaggerate — but it is indeed a matter of life and death.

Yet pollution continues. And it gets worse and worse.

What's the solution? Is increasing pollution the inevitable accompaniment of industrial society? Is man doomed to wipe out his own species in his constant search for technological advance? Do socialists have a solution to pollution, short of turning our backs on technical innovations — or (as some anti-pollution activists suggest) is the struggle for basic social change itself superseded by the urgent necessity to find a solution to the pollution menace?

The shocking fact is that we *do* have the knowledge to limit or even eliminate pollution. A recent report published by the American Chemical Society — which includes scientists in many of the big corporations that contribute to pollution — said that the science and technology of environmental control are sufficiently advanced to permit enormous strides to be taken toward a cleaner environment. "The crucial requirement is that sufficient energy and support be devoted to the task," the ACS said.

Why no action, then?

The nature of the problem is shown clearly by the Liberal government's recent proposals to fight water pollution. There are already no less than 14 federal government departments and a mass of legislation directly concerned with water pollution — all of them ignored. Now the Canada Water Act — to stop pollution? Nothing of the sort; it will allow pollution to continue, but (if enforced) will levy modest fines on private industry to make it pay for the "right" to pollute. Resources Minister J. J. Greene claims the best feature of the bill is that it is "compatible with our free enterprise system."

Exactly! Compatible with free enterprise . . . and profits. But as an anti-pollution measure, "a flop," as the NDP pointed out.

But isn't Greene telling us something? That if we really want to end pollution, we must be prepared to move against private industry, the real culprit in the pollution scandal? That nothing short of the abolition of the profit-oriented "free enterprise" system will enable us to do away with murderous pollution once and for all?

A far-reaching conclusion, perhaps. But the pollution menace, like another hideous instrument of mass destruction, the nuclear bomb, dramatizes the great dilemma of our time — the glaring contradiction between man's impressive achievements in the realm of technology and the inability of his existing social structures to control scientific advances for human benefit.

Many ban-the-bomb advocates, like some of today's anti-pollution activists, thought the sheer enormity of the problem placed it beyond the possibility of political — socialist — solutions. It took the Vietnam war before many pacifists were prepared to locate the real threat to world peace in the profit system — U.S. imperialism — and not in uncontrolled technology or individual moral turpitude.

Pollution, too, is a mass killer; and not just potentially. Every day it kills off as many people or more as die in Vietnam. But the seriousness of the problem, far from taking it out of the realm of political action, only reinforces the need for radical — even revolutionary — solutions. And that means socialism. From what the government tells us, can we conclude otherwise?

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